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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2006

In Today's Papers

Reaction to France Continues in Turkey

All papers report Prime Minister Erdogan told his ruling AKP group yesterday that the approval of the genocide bill in France would not bring any changes for Turkey, but would have 'disastrous consequences' for France. Erdogan denounced the Armenian genocide bill, which will be discussed in the French Parliament on Thursday, as an 'eclipse of reason' marking a 'return to the Middle Ages.'

Several papers stress that if the bill is passed, French businesses would be excluded from up to \$20 billion in investment in Turkey. Some French companies were preparing to participate in a state contract for the construction of a USD 5 billion nuclear power plant in the Black Sea province of Sinop, some others were short-listed in a bid to purchase of USD 2 billion in subway trains for the Istanbul Municipality, and the French Eurocopter manufacturers were among the hopefuls in the helicopter purchases recently announced by the Turkish Defense Industry Undersecretariat.

Papers report former French culture minister and presidential hopeful Jacques Lang told Liberation that the Armenian genocide bill constituted a violation of the French constitution. Yeni Safak claims Armenian President Robert Kocharian warned President Chirac during a visit to Paris to withdraw the bill, stressing an adoption would damage Yerevan's improving ties with Turkey. The paper also claims the Turkish Foreign Ministry (MFA) would apply to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in a preemptive effort to block other European parliaments to follow suit.

The Patriarch of the Armenian community in Turkey, Mesrob II, said the bill would damage ties between the Turks and Armenians, strengthening nationalists on both sides.

Turkey's main Kurdish party DTP leader Ahmet Turk said Europe had weakened initiatives for democratization in Turkey by raising Armenian genocide claims without waiting for a settlement of the

Kurdish problem in Turkey.

Ralston Due to Visit Ankara

Radikal, Cumhuriyet, Milliyet and Yeni Safak report the US Special Envoy for Countering the PKK, retired General Joseph Ralston will visit Ankara on Monday to hold talks with his Turkish counterpart Edip Baser, Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul and other officials. Cumhuriyet reports, citing unidentified security sources, that it was still unclear whether the Iraqi envoy Shirwan al-Walily will join Ralston and Baser in Ankara. Ralston and Baser will discuss the PKK ceasefire decision, says Cumhuriyet, quoting unnamed diplomatic sources saying the US 'overemphasized' the call by the PKK, and that Ralston might ask the Turks to take steps in reaction to the ceasefire. Ralston will ask for an 'integration process' for any PKK militants laying down arms, and will even offer funds to facilitate the efforts, according to the paper.

Turkish Military Delegation Visits Beirut

Milliyet, Cumhuriyet, Sabah, Yeni Safak, Turkiye and Radikal report an eight-member delegation from the Turkish General Staff (TGS) traveled to Beirut to inspect the areas where the first dispatch of Turkish military engineers will be stationed as well as to hold talks with the Lebanese authorities. A 260-strong Turkish contingent is to be deployed soon to the coastal city of Sur to join UNIFIL. The Turkish Navy's 'TCG Gaziantep' frigate, which left Turkey for Lebanon on Friday, will assume its duties as of October 15. Turkiye reports that USD 15 million in Turkish aid to help in the recovery of war-stricken Lebanon continued.

Editorial Commentary on North Korea

Mehmet Barlas wrote in the mass appeal Sabah (10/11): "We are

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living in the 'information and communication' century. Even China decorates its shelf of communism, not with its nuclear power, but with its production and export capacity. The atomic bombs they produced to use against each other, does not give either Pakistan or India their "Super Power" status in the world politics. Israel's nuclear power is a serious problem for the Middle East. How could Iran defend its uranium enrichment program if Israel did not have nuclear power? While the world recognizes South Korea with the goods they produce, all everyone knows about North Korea is that they are a communist regime. While the people in South Korea live a prosperous life, North Koreans suffer poverty. And now, additionally, North Korea possesses a nuclear bomb. In short; from now on, North Korea is a poor and isolated country with nuclear power. In the end, South Korea's development beats North Korea, just as the West Germany's development beat East Germany's ideology."

Cuneyt Ulsever commented in the mass appeal Hurriyet (10/11): "North Korea was encouraged by Pakistan's struggle to possess nuclear power and make world accept it. Now, there is no excuse left for Iran not to follow North Korea's example. The observers believe that if the UN Security Council applies political and economic sanctions against North Korea and Iran, they will be discouraged to continue their nuclear programs. However, the same observers believe that Russia and China would not approve such sanctions. Being aware of the situation, President Bush said 'we can not keep a blind eye to North Korea selling nuclear weapons to other countries and organizations', while four years ago he was saying that 'it is unacceptable for North Korea to possess nuclear power'. Assuming that the US has lost the power struggle with North Korea, Turkey should not be happy with these developments. Iran will be encouraged to produce a nuclear bomb now and Turkey should consider the dangers of nuclear weapons possessed by Iran and Al-Qaeda in the Middle East. North Korea's test and its impact on the US is an important topic for the entire world. The reaction of the US will determine the Middle East's future."

Kurdish Party Wants Ethnic Parties Allowed

Following a statement of the True Path Party (DYP) leader Mehmet Agar earlier in the week Yeni Safak reports that an amnesty could be considered for the PKK members to lay down arms and engage in politics, the Kurdish party DTP has sent a letter to Turkish

Parliament, AKP, CHP, and ANAP asking for removal of the 10 percent threshold in general elections in Turkey, and the establishment of parties based on ethnic grounds. Cumhuriyet says Agar's proposal has been welcomed by AKP lawmakers from east and southeast Turkey, but that the 'nationalists' in the ruling party have reacted negatively.

Turkish Teenage Priest Killer Sentenced to 18 Years

Hurriyet, Milliyet, Sabah, Cumhuriyet, Radikal, Zaman and others report a Turkish court on Tuesday sentenced a 16-year-old boy to 18 years in jail for shooting dead an Italian Catholic priest, Father Andrea Santoro, while he was praying in his church in the Black Sea city of Trabzon in February. The court in Trabzon said the boy had been found guilty of 'premeditated murder, possessing a weapon without a license and endangering public security.' Under Turkish penal standards, the boy will likely only serve 10 years in prison.

Turkish Embassy Car Burned in Athens

Cumhuriyet reports a guard's car at the Turkish Embassy in Athens was burned on Monday night. Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul is to visit Athens next week. Last year, the mayor of Istanbul, Kadir Topbas, cancelled a visit to Athens when Greek officials added to his program a ceremony for the opening of a monument in honor of the Pontus people who had migrated from Turkey's Black Sea region to Greece. Also last year, the Greek Prime Minister Costas Karamanlis cancelled his trip to Turkey, drawing criticism from his Turkish counterpart Tayyip Erdogan.

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TV Highlights

NTV (7 A.M.)

Domestic News

- Turkish associations in Europe will stage protest rallies against the Armenian genocide bill in Paris.
- One Turkish soldier drowned while trying to rescue two illegal immigrants in Habur River near the southeastern border town of Sirnak. The two immigrants went missing.
- Turkish and Syrian electricity institutions agreed to sell Turkish electricity to Syria.
- A visiting IMF delegation pressed the Turkish government to stick to its 6.5 percent primary surplus target, giving up subsidies for state economic enterprises and electricity production.
- Mayor Kadir Topbas said the Istanbul Municipality would kick off the construction of a third bridge over the Bosphorus in 2007.

International News

- The Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov said North Korea had de facto become the world's ninth nuclear power.
- Iranian lawmakers called on President Ahmadinejad to cut economic ties with Denmark after Danish television showed a cartoon video on the Prophet Muhammad.
- Iranian officials stressed the European Union had been rigid in negotiating with Tehran and pressed the EU to resume talks on trade ties which had been suspended because of the ongoing nuclear row.
- An Italian prosecutor investigating the hijacking of a Turkish airliner to Italy said it will take about two years to launch a court case against the suspected Turkish hijacker.
- Iraqi police found 60 bodies dumped across Baghdad, thought to have been the victims of sectarian death squads.

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